



## Catch the Excitement

Beginning with this edition of *The Link*, we will feature DJJ employees and their work within the agency and in the community in a collection of columns called "Making a Difference." There also will be times when we will feature a DJJ volunteer or community partner and their involvement with the agency as we join forces to change the face of juvenile justice in South Carolina. The series begins with Jimmee-lu Kice, Division of Rehabilitative Services, and Daniel Johnson, Office of the Inspector General. If you know of a DJJ employee or volunteer who you think should be featured, please email your suggestion to [LSNeal@scdjj.net](mailto:LSNeal@scdjj.net)

### "Health is Wealth"

As DJJ employees we are fortunate to have use of the Wellness and Training Center on Shivers Road. You will find that the Center offers a connection between freedom and wellness. There are times when you have to be bold, courageous and willing to commit to the rigor of physical exercise to gain the benefits of freedom of movement to sustain you over time. Just ask Marcie Calvert, a teacher at Willow Lane School. In her quest for freedom of greater movement and better health, Marcie is a regular user at the Center, and along with proper diet, is maintaining a substantial weight loss – more than 200 pounds. Marcie will share her struggles and miraculous success at our Spring Fling for Wellness seminar on April 10 at the Wellness and Training Center.

## Making a Difference

### Jimmee-lu Kice

Anyone who walks into DJJ's Temporary Community Center in the Santee building will likely find DJJ employee **Jimmee-lu Kice** hard at work, with juveniles joining her in doing some enterprise learning. Painting custom tiles, sewing, and tailoring activities are all par for the course. What many may not know is that she began as a volunteer. "When I first came to DJJ as a volunteer, I was just going to help with Bible study," says Jimmee-lu. "But the girls at Willow Lane got permission to paint the walls of their TASC Center so I helped them with that project and then we made curtains." Using skills as a professional custom tiles designer and her sewing skills,



**Jimmee-lu Kice** she quickly moved to teaching the juveniles trade skills they never imagined. She found that both boys and girls were interested in learning these new skills, as trades and as a chance to express themselves artistically. Their work can be seen in the Girls Transition Home at Willow Lane.

"There is a lot of talent here, a lot of skills that the students have but they just need a little work," she adds. And she also takes her work outside the fence. For example, this past Christmas she worked with her students to provide custom-sewn Christmas stockings for the local Hannah House homeless shelter for women and children. She and her students have also painted door signs for Habitat for Humanity. "She cares about the hopes and dreams of each young person she works with and helps children find their passion," said Stacey Atkinson, DJJ Director of the Community Behind the Fence.

### Daniel Johnson

Many DJJ employees know **Daniel Johnson** for his work as an investigator for our Inspector General's Office. Many employees also know that Daniel started out at DJJ as a JCO over 20 years ago. And almost everyone knows of his friendliness, endless source of humor, and good spirit. But few know about the work he does for children outside the workplace.



Daniel and his wife have been therapeutic foster parents for over 12 years, taking care of special needs children in their home. **Daniel Johnson** Therapeutic foster care is designed to provide special foster care for children with severe emotional disorders. Therapeutic foster parents receive special training to provide a structured, stable home environment that supports children's learning, social, and emotional skills. "I've always heard people say that, in life, what goes around comes around," says Johnson. "And it feels like sometimes we should give back, especially when we've been blessed with so many good things and good people." Johnson has also served as a volunteer youth football and baseball



**Daniel Johnson continued**

coach for several years, served as an advisor to his church's youth ministry, and volunteered as a mentor at Forest Heights Elementary School. He has also served as a Big Brother to children in his community and worked with the Truancy/Drop-Out Prevention Initiative through Richland School District One. "Daniel is a valuable asset to DJJ, but he's also a valuable asset outside of the agency in his work with children," says Dennis Burdette, DJJ Inspector General. "He's never forgotten that it's all about helping the children, here at DJJ and in the community."

**DJJ "Palmetto Gold" Award**

We are indeed proud of our educational accomplishments! For the fourth consecutive year, DJJ's school district is one of the top performing districts in the state and has again earned the "Palmetto Gold School" designation for its academic achievements.

Our district will share in funding earmarked for this program with more than 230 other schools receiving Palmetto Gold or Silver awards. Schools receiving the awards are being recognized for having high levels of academic achievement and high rates of student academic improvement. This is the seventh year of the Palmetto Gold and Silver Program which was created by the Education Accountability Act. In addition to the monetary award, DJJ will receive a Palmetto Gold flag and a certificate to commemorate the district's accomplishments.

**ISI Highlighted at Conference**

In January, DJJ Director Bill Byars and TeNeane Johnson, DJJ's Intensive Supervision/

Reentry State Coordinator, conducted a presentation on the agency's Intensive Supervision Initiative (ISI), at the National Juvenile Reentry Conference. The conference was sponsored by the Performance Institute.

Their presentation focused on how to effectively plan for a juvenile's return to the community while they are still incarcerated.

They also discussed the planning process focusing on cross-divisional and system communication, working with families and juveniles prior to release, and ensuring referrals are made and transportation is available to youth and their families to meet parole required treatment.

**Promotions and Recognitions**

**Jabari Dunbar** has been promoted to regional administrator for DJJ's Coastal Region. He joined the Department as a project director in 2001. Now, as a Regional Administrator in the Division of Community Services, Dunbar is responsible for the hiring, training and evaluation of staff, directing administrative activities within the region, and managing the regional budget.



He completed his post-secondary coursework at Howard University and Howard University School of Law.

He spent several years advocating on behalf of youth, and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Beaufort County Collaborative Organization for Services for Youth (COSY) and is a mentor with the South Carolina Youth Challenge Academy at Camp Long in Aiken.

**Sylvia G. Kitchens**, CPA, DJJ's senior consultant/legislative liaison, is the new president of the South Carolina Association of Certified Public Accountants. Her responsibilities include leading the organization's more than 3,700 members to promote financial literacy.



At DJJ, she is the primary liaison for the agency with the Legislature, the Governor's Office and the State Budget Office. She represents DJJ in various legislative committee meetings and hearings; responding to requests from legislators and legislative committee staff for information.

She monitors the budget during the legislative session and other bills which will or could have an impact on DJJ. In addition, she acts as the senior consultant on legislative and fiscal issues; prepares the agency budget request, annual activity inventory and provides research and analysis on various projects. She is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a degree in Business Administration.

**Wayne A. Bennett** has been named county director for the DJJ Colleton County office. He was previously Intensive Supervision Officer for Allendale and Hampton counties, and at one time was a DJJ volunteer. He assumes his new position with vision, passion and significant community support.

**Miss Willow Lane Pageant**

Thank you to staff and community supporters who made the Miss Willow Lane Pageant possible. Congratulations to Social Worker **Leigh Hicks**, for creating this self-awareness opportunity for young women at DJJ!